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# *A Democrat Deflates a Trump 'Scandal'*

An email from Sen. Amy Klobuchar shows that officials acted on the policy merits.



By

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Updated June 6, 2019 7:20 pm ET

Democrats have grown expert in these Trump days at creating fake scandals. So it's refreshing to read a previously undisclosed email in which Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a presidential aspirant, destroys a leading narrative even as she highlights her own party's excesses.

The "scandal" here involves Twin Metals Minnesota, which holds two mineral leases on government land outside the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in the northeastern part of the state. The Interior Department had renewed the leases continuously for decades. But when Twin Metals got serious about a mine, the Obama administration jumped into bed with green activists who ardently opposed it.

In 2014, Interior delayed the renewals, calling for more "study." In early 2016, the department's solicitor issued a howler of a legal opinion, granting the government new authority to deny Twin Metals automatic lease renewals. It was an Obama extralegal classic: The opinion ignored precedent, existing rights and regular procedure. In a midnight kiss to green activists, the department officially blocked the leases on Dec. 15, 2016.

This highly irregular decision was destined to get a fresh look from the Trump team. The new president's appointees at the Interior and Agricultural departments all came to office determined to restore the law and regulatory certainty. In December 2017, the new Interior principal deputy solicitor found the prior opinion fatally flawed and moved to renew Twin Metals' leases. The company moved on to an arduous environmental review, and it could still be blocked by the feds or the state. Beyond some furious greens, that should have been the end of the matter.